

Appl. No.: 10/749,762
Amdt. dated 11/19/2007
Reply to Office Action of June 19, 2007

REMARKS

The allowance of Claims 2, 9-14 and 25-36 and the confirmation that Claims 4 and 6-8 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form is appreciated. Of the allowable claims, Claims 6 and 7 have been rewritten in independent form and should be in condition for immediate allowance. As to the remaining claims, however, Claims 1, 3 and 5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by each of U.S. Patent No. 3,848,379 to John O. Hazen and U.S. Patent No. 4,866,898 to Allan R. LaRoche, et al. In order to advance examination in the most expeditious manner and without comment as to the propriety of the rejections, independent Claim 1 has been amended to include the recitations previously set forth by allowable dependent Claim 4. As such, Claim 4 has now been canceled. For at least the same reasons that Claim 4 was previously found to be allowable, the rejection of amended independent Claim 1 should be overcome and amended independent Claim 1 should be in condition for immediate allowance. In light of their dependency upon amended independent Claim 1, the rejection of Claims 3 and 5 and the objection to Claim 8 should also be overcome, with these dependent claims similarly being in condition for immediate allowance.

It is noted that the foregoing amendments to Claims 1, 6 and 7 do not raise new issues since the amendments merely present claims in independent form that were previously set forth in dependent form. As such, the amendments should therefore be substantively considered at this juncture.

In view of the amendments to the claims and the foregoing remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in condition for allowance. As such, the issuance of a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested. In order to expedite examination of the present application, the Examiner is encouraged to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney in order to resolve any remaining issues.

It is not believed that extensions of time or fees for net addition of claims are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 CFR § 1.136(a), and any fee required

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therefore (including fees for net addition of claims) is hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 16-0605.

Respectfully submitted,



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